

# LONE WOLF

AND

子狼成狼

# CUB

VOLUME 18

TWILIGHT OF  
THE KUROKUWA

By KAZUO KOIKE  
& GOSEKI KOJIMA



子連水狼

# LONE WOLF AND CUB

子連次狼

story  
**KAZUO KOIKE**  
art  
**GOSEKI KOJIMA**



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TWILIGHT  
OF THE  
KUROKUWA

By KAZUO KOIKE  
& GOSEKI KOJIMA

子連れ狼



VOLUME

18

# A NOTE TO READERS

*Lone Wolf and Cub* is famous for its carefully researched re-creation of Edo-Period Japan. To preserve the flavor of the work, we have chosen to retain many Edo-Period terms that have no direct equivalents in English. Japanese is written in a mix of Chinese ideograms and a syllabic writing system, resulting in numerous synonyms. In the glossary, you may encounter words with multiple meanings. These are words written with Chinese ideograms that are pronounced the same but carry different meanings. A Japanese reader seeing the different ideograms would know instantly which meaning it is, but these synonyms can cause confusion when Japanese is spelled out in our alphabet. *O-yurushi o* (please forgive us)!

# LONE WOLF AND CUB



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*the eighty-eighth*



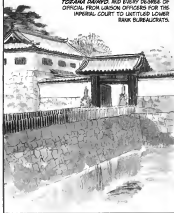
# Firewatchers of the Black Gate



(JANUARY)  
 THE FIRST DAY  
 OF THE NEW  
 YEAR HALF PAST  
 THE SIXTH JOMBY  
 (SEVEN A.M.)



THE SHAMPO SHAMPO BRANCHES OF THE  
 TOKUGAWA CLAN THE FURRY SHAMPO THE  
 FURRY SHAMPO AND EVERY PLEASURE OF  
 OFFICIAL FROM WARDEN OFFICERS FOR THE  
 IMPERIAL COURT TO UNTITLED LOWER  
 RANK BUREAUCRATS.



THE AOMI AND AOMI  
 PRIESTS, DOCTORS AND  
 PRAYERS, DANCERS AND  
 SINGERS AND ACTORS.  
 ALL MUST ATTEND THE  
 CASTLE TO CONGRATULATE  
 THE SHOGUN ON THE  
 NEW YEAR.

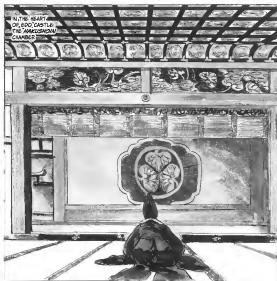








IN THE HEART  
OF EDO CASTLE,  
THE JAMESON  
CHAMBER





YASUJI KETSUJŌ  
HUMBLY REJOICES  
IN THE DAWN OF A  
NEW YEAR FOR MY  
LORD'S REIGN, MAY  
IT LAST A THOUSAND  
GENERATIONS.

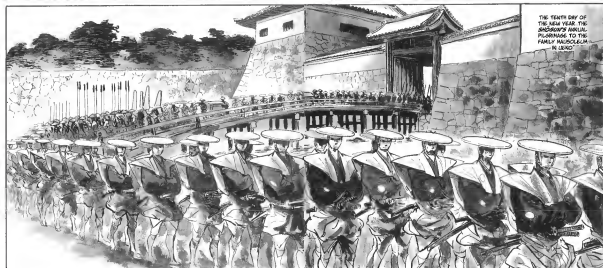


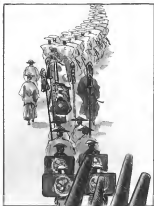
YOUR GLORY  
ILLUMINATES THE  
SIXTY STATES OF JAPAN.  
THE LAND AND THE FOUR  
SEAS ARE AT PEACE.  
TRULY A FORTUITOUS  
NEW YEAR.



I THINK  
ABOUT

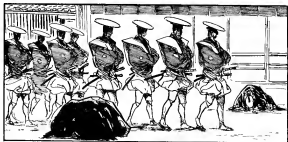
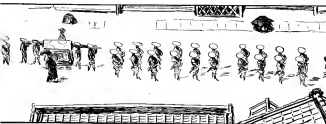














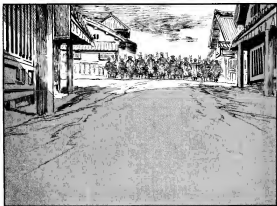
ALL JUDGED SAMURAI  
ESTATES ALONG  
HIS ROUTE CLOSE  
THEIR GATES...



...AND THE CLAN HEAD,  
SEATED BEHIND CLOSED  
DOORS, PROSTRATES  
HIMSELF AT THE SHOUT  
OF THE SAMURAI-  
SCOUTS:  
"OBEDIENCE!"









A BUFFER ZONE THREE  
WARDS DEEP ALONG THE  
PILGRIMAGE ROUTE IS  
DECLARED HEADQUARTERS,  
A SMOKE-FREE ZONE.



THE WARRIORS ASSIGNED TO  
ENSURE ALL FIRES ARE OUT  
ARE THE *ABASSIRPOON-SAD*,  
HAND-PICKED FROM AMONG  
THE *SHOKUNTS* *ABANAKA*  
FOOT SOLDIERS.







...THE *ASHIGURU*—WHO  
GUARD THE *SHOGUN* IN  
ROOTS, AND DEFEND THE  
*KOROMON*—THE *BLACK*  
GATE OF THE MAUSOLEUM.

THE *SHOGUN*'S  
SHADOW GUARDIANS—  
THE *FINERITCHERS*  
OF THE *BLACK GATE*!



西風

明地

青院

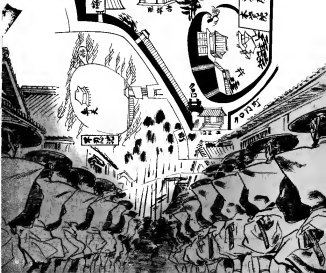
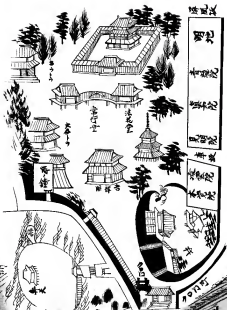
翠院

翠院

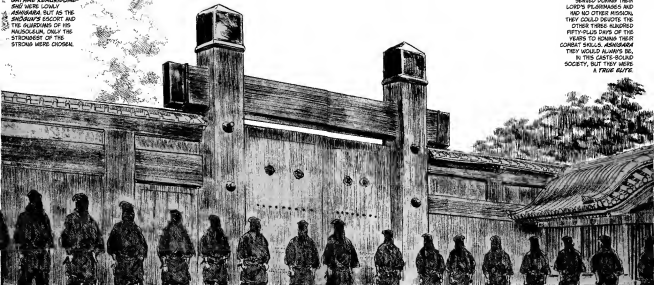
車坡

雲院

雲院

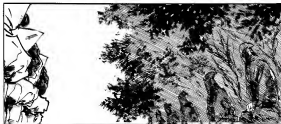
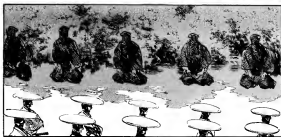
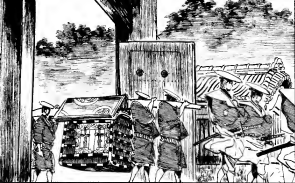


THESE KUROMON-  
GATANE REMAINED  
AND WERE LOWLY  
ASHIGARA, BUT AS THE  
SHOGUN'S ESCORT AND  
THE GUARDIANS OF HIS  
MAUSOLEUM, ONLY THE  
STRONGEST OF THE  
STRONG WERE CHOSEN.



AND SINCE THEY ONLY  
SERVED DURING THEIR  
LORD'S PILGRIMAGES AND  
HAD NO OTHER MISSION,  
THEY COULD DEVOTE THE  
OTHER THREE HUNDRED  
FIFTY-PLUS DAYS OF THE  
YEARS TO HONING THEIR  
COMBAT SKILLS. ASHIGARA  
THEY WOULD ALWAYS BE,  
IN THIS CASTE-BOUND  
SOCIETY, BUT THEY WERE  
A TRUE ELITE.













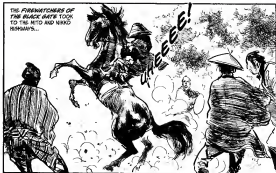








THE FIREWATCHERS OF  
THE BLACK MOUNTAIN TOOK  
TO THE MTD AND NIKKO  
ROADS...

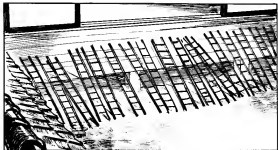


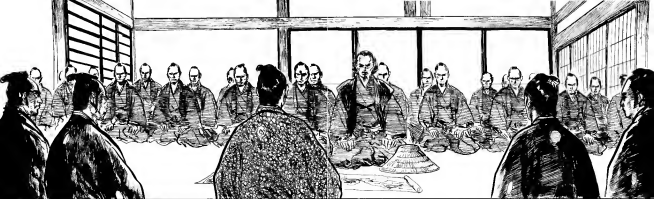
...THIS TIME AS  
WOLF WATCHERS!













BARON



LOVE WOLF  
WOULDN'T  
FEAR FOR

MY CONCLUSION? HE CANNOT  
ENDURE KILLING PEASANTS AND  
TOWNPEOPLE DRIVEN AWAY  
WITH BRIBES BY YOUR FIVE  
THOUSAND RYO BOUNTY.



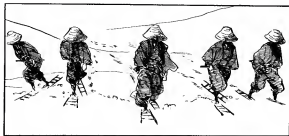
HE'LL REMAIN  
SEQUESTERED  
UNTIL THE PLANTING  
SEASON.

THE PEASANTS WILL  
WATCH LIKE HAWKS WHILE  
WINTER LASTS, BUT COME  
MARCH HE'LL BE THE LAST  
THING ON THEIR MINDS.

TRIAL... YOU  
THINK...



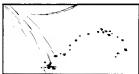


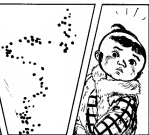




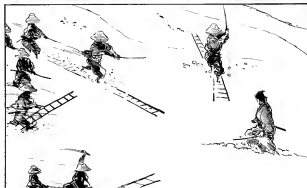
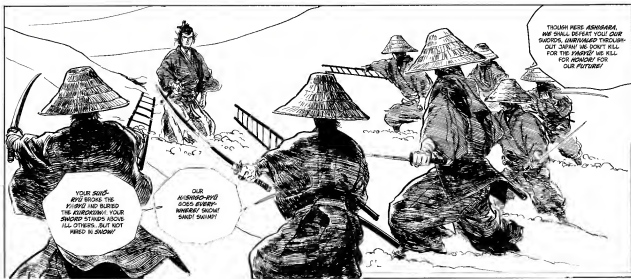




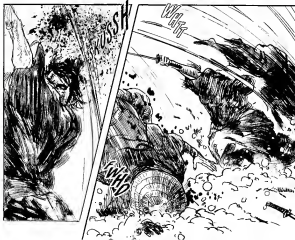






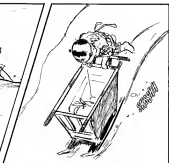






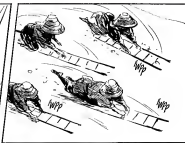


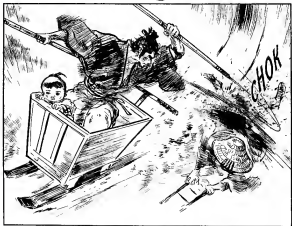














*the eighty-ninth*



# The Immortal Fire Watchers





FWHOOSHH

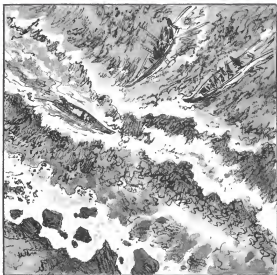
WSSSHH

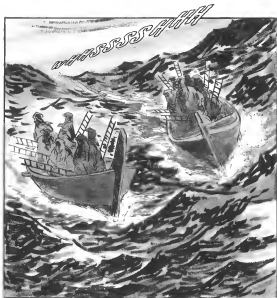


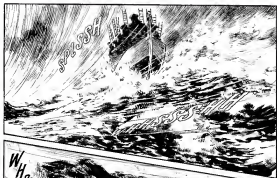


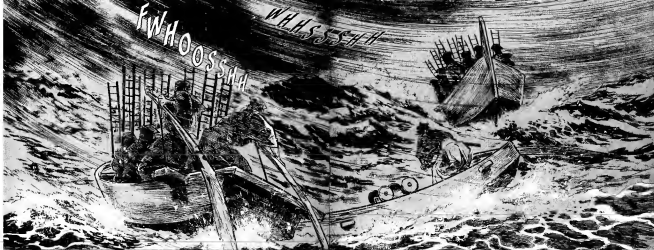




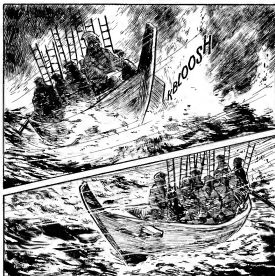


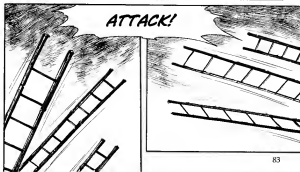
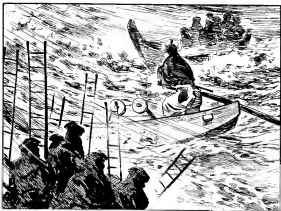






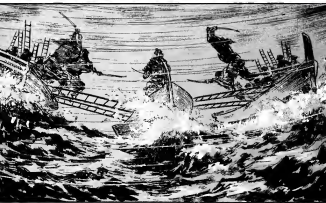










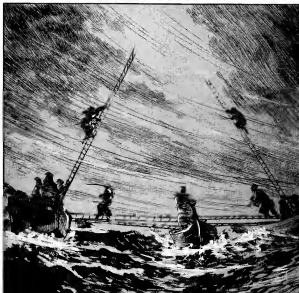
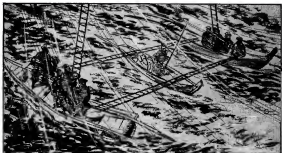




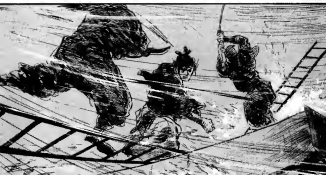


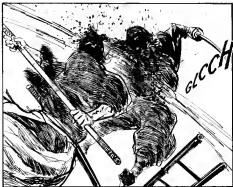






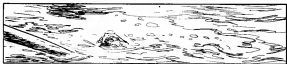












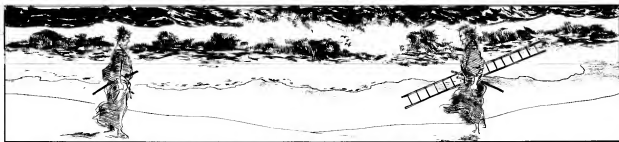


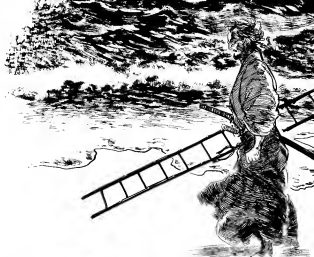




ASHIGARA!  
YET STILL  
SAMURAI!

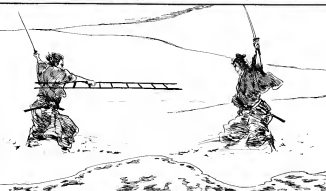






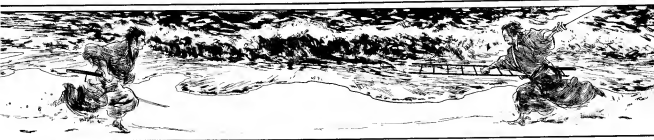






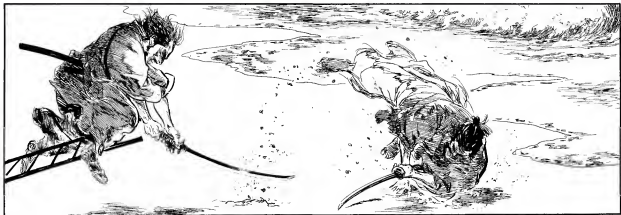






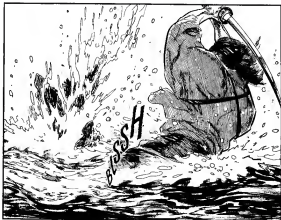


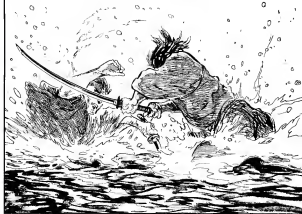














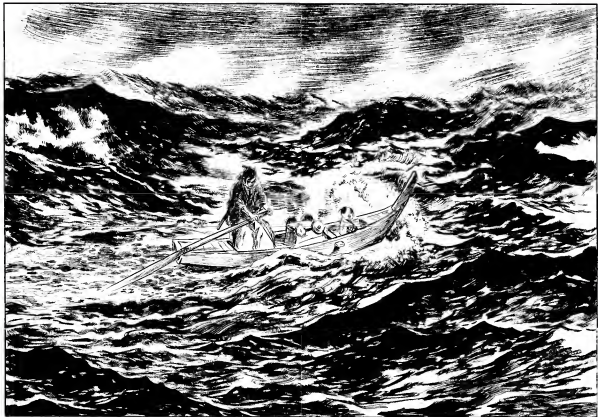


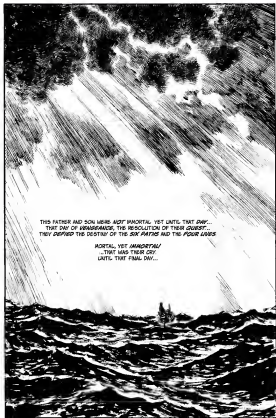












THIS FATHER AND SON WERE NOT IMMORTAL. YET UNTIL THAT DAY...  
THAT DAY OF REARRANGING, THE RESOLUTION OF THEIR GRIEF...  
THEY DEFIED THE DESTINY OF THE SON PARTIS AND THE FOUR LINES

IMMORTAL, YET IMMORTAL!  
...THAT WAS THEIR CRY.  
UNTIL THAT FINAL DAY...

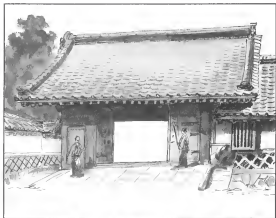




*the ninetieth*

# Paper Money

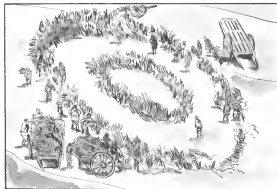


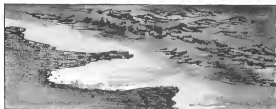
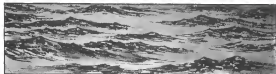
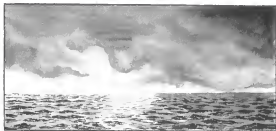














THEY SAY IF YOU LEAVE  
THE TRAIL, HARDER FOR  
SACRAMENT, LIKE  
WOLF AND CLUB THIS  
IS WAY TO FIND  
ONLY REMOTE..?







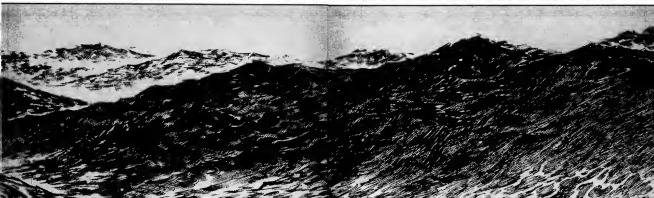
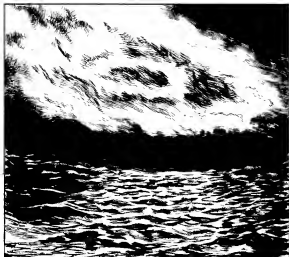
WILL HE READ  
THIS FIRE AS A  
TRAFFIC OR AS THE  
HEART OF ONE  
DESPERATE TO  
MEET HER?

BY HIS  
CHOICE  
SHALL I  
KNOW HIM.

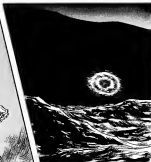


IF HE TRULY LIVES  
IN AMSTERDAM, AT  
THE JUNCTION OF THE  
SIX WAYS AND THE FOUR  
LINES, HE'LL STEER FOR  
THE BURNING  
FLAMES

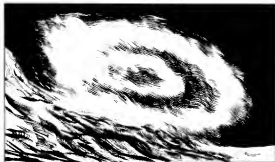
I BELIEVE  
HE WILL AND  
ONLY ONE WHO  
CHOOSSES FIRE  
CAN UNDERSTAND  
MY ANGER.



















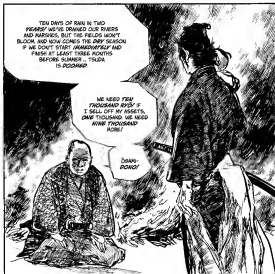






FROM THE DAY  
I WAS POSTED HERE,  
I'VE TRIED TO BREAK  
THE CYCLE OF DROUGHT  
AND FLOODS THAT  
STRUCK TSUKA LIKE  
CLOCKWORK.

I'VE DUGGED THE  
SAGURAWAYS AT EVERY  
TURN TO FIND THE CANAL,  
OR AT LEAST REDUCE OUR  
TIMES. BUT NOTHING!  
AND NOW THIS DROUGHT  
COULD END US ALL.



TEN DAYS OF RAIN IN TWO  
FIGURES! WE'VE DRAINED OUR RIVERS  
AND WATERSHEDS, BUT THE FIELDS WON'T  
BLOOM, AND NOW COMES THE DRY SEASON.  
IF WE DON'T START AGGRAVATINGLY AND  
FINISH AT LEAST THREE MONTHS  
BEFORE SUMMER... TSUKA  
IS DOOMED.

WE NEED TEN  
THOUSAND RYŪ! IF  
I SELL OFF MY ASSETS,  
ONE THOUSAND WE NEED  
NINE THOUSAND  
RYŪ!

DOOM-  
DOOM!



WILL YOU  
GIVE ME NINE  
THOUSAND  
RYO?



I DON'T NEED  
MONEY TO GUESS  
YOU'VE AMASSED  
A FORTUNE.

FIVE HUNDRED  
RYO A HEAD.  
TWENTY ASSAS-  
SINATIONS WOULD  
MAKE YOU TEN  
THOUSAND.



I KNOW WHY YOU  
WANT THAT SOLD. IF  
YOU DEFEAT THE FUYU,  
YOU'LL NEED TO BRING  
150 TO REINSTATE THE  
SAMAI CLAN FOR  
YOUR SON.



BUT IF ANY  
SPEAK MY MIND,  
IT'S ALL JUST  
BISHU KODAN!



BISHU  
KODAN...?



YES, PAPER  
MONEY FOR  
THE DEAD.

GOOD  
LIFE! CANHAI!  
NOTHING  
MORE.



EVEN IF  
YOU TRIUMPH,  
YOU'VE CRUSHED  
TWO ARM AND  
THREE SHOGUNATE  
TERRITORIES



EDO CAN  
ANYMORE RE-INSTATE  
YOU NOW, NO  
BETTER WANT YOU  
PAY AND TO BE  
JUDGENT...

FOR ONE WHO WAS ONCE  
 ASHIN KASHIMAZU TO  
 RESOLVE HIS GUILT WITH MONEY  
 FROM KILLING THE JINSAKAI IS  
 ASH. NO MATTER WHAT YOU  
 HAVE SUFFERED, ANANAI  
 WILL NOT FORGIVE IT!



YOUR GUILT  
 WAS ONCE PAID  
 FOR ASHIN'S BUT  
 ANANAI CAN'T BUY  
 BACK THE FIRST.



*SKSSSH*

THUS  
 YOUR GOLD IS  
 BUT ASHIN KASHIN,  
 FIT FOR THE JINSAI.  
 BUT SHINING LIKE  
 THOUSAND LIVES...  
 NOW, FIGHT IS  
 YOURS!

OR SHOULD  
 I SAY PRINCESHIP  
 FOR ALL YOUR  
 KILLING

*SPLSH*









IT'S TIME  
TO USE THAT  
MONEY!



ARRRR!



WE HAVE  
NO ROAD,  
NO JESSE  
KOBAYASHI

NOT ONCE  
HAD I THOUGHT  
TO REBUILD  
MY CLAN

FATHER AND  
SON, WE LIVE  
IN AN UNFAMOUS  
LIFE AND DEATH  
ARE ONE.



THEN  
ALL THAT  
GOLD FOR  
BAMMY?

I NEED  
NOT TELL  
YOU









BUT IF YOU  
WANT THE WOLF'S  
LOVE, THEN WELL  
AND GOOD!



TAKE  
IT IF YOU  
CAN!





SHINGG













PLEASE!  
DOWN-  
POWER!



WE  
ACCEPT.



































DOWN-  
DOWN!



I HAVE  
TOLD YOU,  
YIN-YI-  
DOWN!

—WE LIVE BY  
HONORABLE.  
WE NEED NO  
REST!



YOUR  
LOVE FOR  
YOUR PEOPLE  
MOVED MY  
HEART.

THAT'S  
WHY WE  
STAYED.

MY  
SWORD  
WAS ALWAYS  
READY TO  
DRAW. DID  
YOU NOT  
SEE?



....

....



JUST NINE  
THOUSAND RYU!  
PLEASE!



THE  
PEASANTS OF  
TOLDA SUFFERED  
WITH PARCHED  
THROATS!

SAVE THEM!  
I-BEG YOU!





**DEMON!**



**DEVIL!**



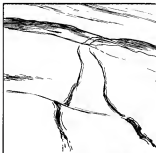
**BEAST!!**

**MURDERER!!**



**DEMON!!**







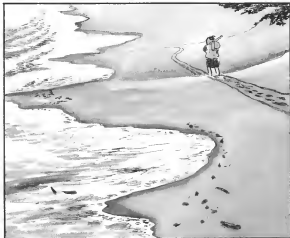
*the ninety-first*

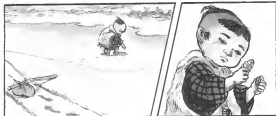


**Lifeline**



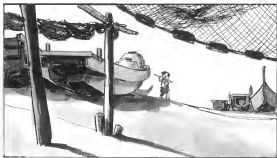


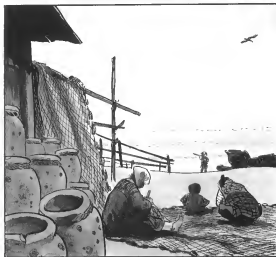
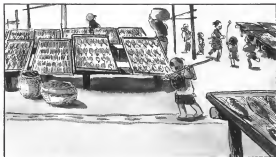


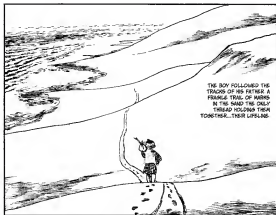












THE BOY FOLLOWED THE  
TRACKS OF HIS FATHER. A  
FRAGILE TRAIL OF MARKS  
IN THE SAND THE ONLY  
THREAD HOLDING THEM  
TOGETHER...THEIR LIFELINE.



WHY DID THEY HAVE TO  
SEPARATE WHEN THEY  
APPROACHED A TOWN?  
WHY DID HE HAVE TO  
FOLLOW HIS FATHER'S  
FOOTSTEPS FROM SO  
FAR AWAY...?



WHY COULDN'T  
HE BE WITH PAPA  
AS HE HAD BEEN  
BEFORE...?





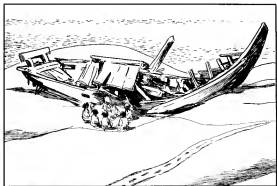
THEY WERE FORCED  
TO AVOID SHEDDING  
INNOCENT BLOOD. IT  
WAS BEST TO AVOID  
HOSTILE EYES. SO  
REASONABLE... BUT DID  
THE BOY UNDERSTAND?



HE ONLY  
FOLLOWED  
HIS FATHER'S  
FOOTPRINTS.



THE LIFELINE  
OF A FATHER'S  
FOOTPRINTS,  
LINGERING IN  
THE SAND...









THAT "CUCKOO,"  
IT MEANS, "CHILD  
COME BACK TO ME,  
CHILD COME  
HOME."



"CHILD COME  
BACK TO ME,  
CHILD COME  
HOME!"

*CUCKOO!*  
*CUCKOO!*



*CUCKOO!*  
*CUCKOO!*

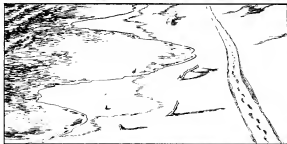


YEP...THAT'S  
WHY HE SINGS,  
AND THAT'S WHY  
HE GOT'S ONE  
BLACK LEG.

HE DONE  
TURNED ~~AND~~  
WITH ~~AND~~ HIS  
LEGGIN'S ON.



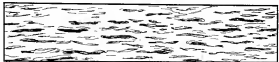
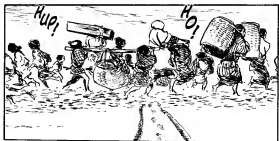




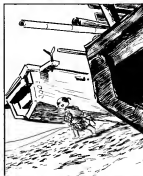


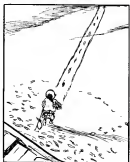


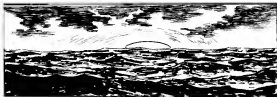


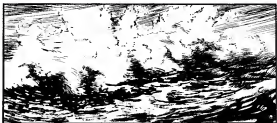










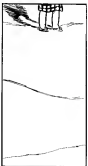








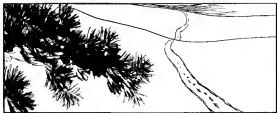
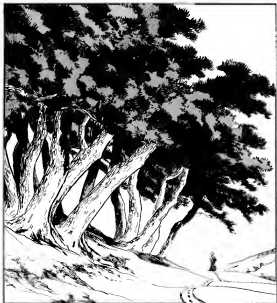














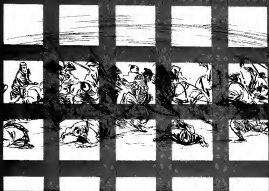


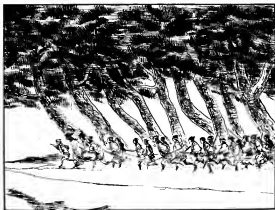






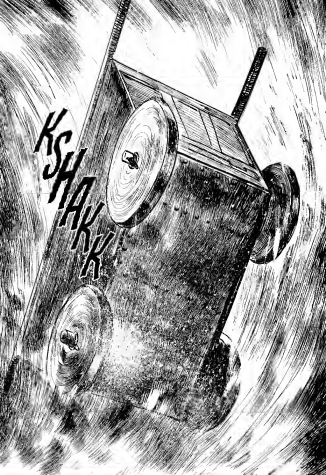










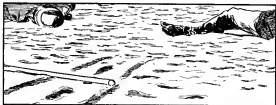




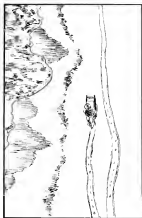




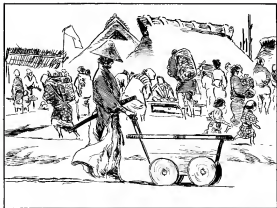








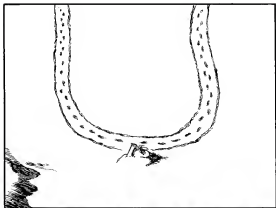














"CHILD, COME BACK TO ME"... THE SEA SURGE  
ECHOED THE CALL OF  
THE CUCKOO.



FROM THE CHURN  
OF THE SURF, THAT  
DESPERATE CRY...  
"COME BACK TO ME,  
CHILD, MY LITTLE  
LIFE."

THE LIFELESS  
BANDING FATHER  
AND SON, CAST  
OUT ONCE AGAIN.

BEHIND FOR ONE MORE  
DAY TOGETHER, THE WHITE  
SANDS WHISPERED: "COME  
TO ME, MY CHILD... COME  
TO ME, MY LIFE."





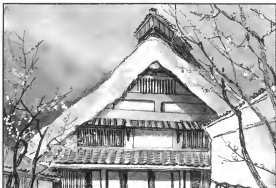
*the ninety-second*

# Twilight of the Kuzokuwa

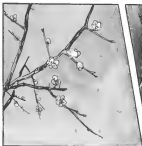




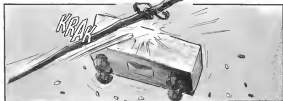








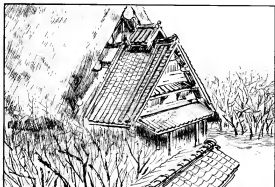






















AND OF  
THE MISSING...  
I ALONE  
REMAIN.

SHEN  
SHOU.  
MURATO.  
SHIBUKI...



SHEN SHOU  
AND SEVERAL OF  
THE SOLDIERS  
LOST.

NO ONE  
WO DARE  
JURY ONE  
OLD MAN...



...AND FEW  
YEARS LEFT  
TO HER AS  
WELL.

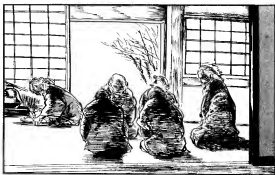


**YET  
I STILL  
LIVE!**



SO LET  
US CHAT ABOUT  
THE WORLD YOU  
LEFT BEHIND.

PERSUASION  
OVER SOME  
TEA...

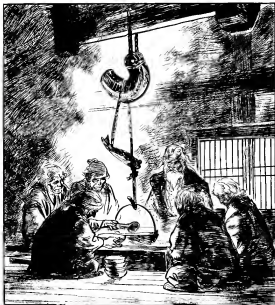
































WE HAVE OUR LIVES TO THE KODOKUWA. WE WERE ARMED WITH NO TOMORROW, KEPT ON JAWA OF BLOOD, A MASS OF FLASHING BLADES.

WE TOOK NO SPARKS, BORE NO CHILDREN ALONE IN THE WORLD, NOW IN KODOKUWA, NOW IN KAWAKATSU, MISSING WITH THE GOD OF DEATH UNDER ALBA SKIES. FOR FIFTY YEARS!



THE GOD OF THE KODOKUWA—FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE, THEN FREEDOM DUTY DISCHARGED, WE CAN DIE HERE IN KUDOKUWA VILLAGE.



WE'VE GAINED THAT RIGHT...

EMERGED IT, WITH THESE HANDS.



HOW ARE THE MASTER, BUT THE GOD IS THE GOD. NO MORE ORDERS!



I DON'T ORDER

I ASK.



MASTER WE'RE SAVING NO MORE.

OLD AND FEEDLE, WE'VE ABANDONED THE WORLD. HOW CAN WE FIGHT A GOD?

IT'S TRUE, WE'RE JUST... OLD FOLK.



THEN WHY  
DO YOU STILL  
USE JUTSURY?

IF YOU'RE  
JUST OLD FOLK,  
MY DASSER AND  
STAFF WOULD  
HAVE KILLED  
YOU!



YET YOU USE YOUR  
SASSAR? NO, YOU ARE  
STILL ANNOY!



A FIREWATCHER  
WILL TAKE YOU  
TO DOAM ITTO! ALL  
IS ARRANGED!



GO!  
IMMEDIATELY!











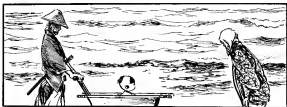


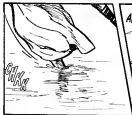














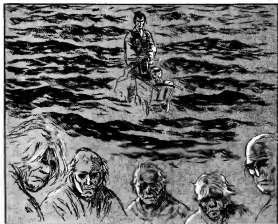










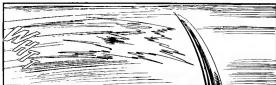






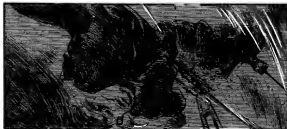










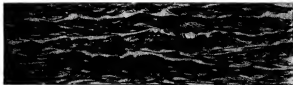












LONE WOLF AND CUR BOCK EIGHTEEN: THE END  
TO BE CONTINUED

# GLOSSARY

**ashigara**

Lightly armed foot soldiers, the lowest ranks of the samurai caste.

**buke**

A samurai household.

**bushi**

A samurai. A member of the warrior class.

**bushidō**

The way of the warrior. Also known as *shidō*.

**daikan**

An official who collected taxes owed to Edo and oversaw public works, agriculture, and other projects administered by the central government.

**daimyō**

A feudal lord.

**Edo**

The capital of medieval Japan and the seat of the shōgunate. The site of modern-day Tokyo.

**Fudai daimyō**

The inner circle of clans pledging allegiance to the Tokugawa. The Fudai clans were Tokugawa allies even before Tokugawa Ieyasu's decisive victory at Sekigahara that launched the Tokugawa Shogunate.

**go-shihei-sama**

Master

**han**

A feudal domain.

**nashigo**

Ladder

**hōgen**

The second highest rank of Buddhist priest.

**hōin**

Hōin dai-wakō, the highest ranked Buddhist priests.

**honoriifics**

Japan is a class and status society and proper forms of address are critical. Common markers of respect are the prefixes *e* and *go*, and a wide range of suffixes. Some of the suffixes you will encounter in *Love Hōf and Goh dōwa* – archaic; used for higher-ranked or highly respected figures, *sama* – used for superiors.

**jiji**

Old man. Grandfather. Both intimate ... and condescending.

**jutsu**

A martial arts skill, especially the techniques of the ninja.

**koōgi kalishakunin**

The shōgun's own sword, who performed executions ordered by the shōgun.

**koku**

A bale of rice. The traditional measure of a *han's* wealth, a measure of its agricultural land and productivity.

**kuzuryu**

A gruel of arrowroot starch sweetened with sugar. A food of the very poor.

**meifumadō**

The Buddhist Hell. The way of demons and damnation.

**nagamaki**

A two-handed weapon taller than a man, with a long, curved blade.

**ō-metsuke**

Chief inspector. The supreme law-enforcement officer of the shōgunate.

**rōnin**

A masterless samurai. Literally, "one adrift on the waves." Members of the samurai caste who have lost their masters through the dissolution of han, expulsion for misbehavior, or other reasons. Prohibited from working as farmers or merchants under the strict Confucian caste system imposed by the Tokugawa shōgunate, many impoverished men became "hired guns" for whom the code of the samurai was nothing but empty words.

**ryō**

A gold piece, worth 40 monme.

**ryū**

Often translated as "school." The many variations of swordsmanship and other martial arts were passed down from generation to generation to the offspring of the originator of the technique or set of techniques, and to any students that sought to learn from the master. The largest schools had their own *dōjō* training centers and scores of students. An effective swordsman had to study the different techniques of the various schools to know how to block them in combat. Many *ryū* also had a set of

special, secret techniques that were only taught to school inmates.

**sakibure-sōmetsuke**

Advance runner. Metsuke inspector in charge of clearing the road for the shōgun.

**sakki**

The palpable desire to kill, directed at another person. Sometimes called blood lust. Based on the concept of *ki*, or energy, found in spiritual practices and Japanese martial arts like Aikido. These body energies can be felt beyond the physical self by the trained and self-aware.

**sankyo sanke**

The three sub-branches of the Tokugawa Clan. When there was no heir to the main Tokugawa line, one would be picked from two of these clans, while the *fuku-shōgun* (Vice-shōgun) always came from the third.

**sayu**

Unflavored hot water.

**seppuku**

The right to kill oneself with honor to atone for failure, or to follow one's master into death. Only the samurai class was allowed this glorious but excruciating death. The abdomen was cut horizontally, followed by an upward cut to spill out the intestines. When possible, a *kashikarin* performed a beheading after the cut was made to shorten the agony.

**Tozama daimyō**

Daimyō who rallied to the Tokugawa side only after the Tokugawa victory at Sekigahara.

**ukiyo**

The floating world. The daily, and transient, world of man.

# KAZUO KOIKE

Though widely respected as a powerful writer of graphic fiction, Kazuo Koike has spent a lifetime reaching beyond the bounds of the comics medium. Aside from co-creating and writing the successful *Love Wolf and Cub* and *Crying Freeman* manga, Koike has hosted television programs; founded a golf magazine; produced movies; written popular fiction, poetry, and screenplays; and mentored some of Japan's best manga talents.

*Love Wolf and Cub* was first serialized in Japan in 1970 (under the title *Kazure Okami*) in *Manga Action* magazine and continued its hugely popular run for many years, being collected as the stories were published, and repainted worldwide. Koike collected numerous awards for his work on the series throughout the next decade. Starting in 1973, Koike adapted the popular manga into a series of six films, the *Baby Cart Anzame* saga, garnering widespread commercial success and critical acclaim for his screenwriting.

This wasn't Koike's only foray into film and video. In 1996, *Crying Freeman*, the manga Koike created with artist Ryōichi Ikegami, was

produced in Hollywood and released to commercial success in Europe and is currently awaiting release in America.

And to give something back to the medium that gave him so much, Koike started the *Gekiga Senjuku*, a college course aimed at helping talented writers and artists — such as *Ranma 1/2* creator Rumiko Takahashi — break into the comics field.

The driving focus of Koike's narrative is character development, and his commitment to character is clear: "Comics are carried by characters. If a character is well created, the comic becomes a hit." Kazuo Koike's continued success in comics and literature has proven this philosophy true.



# GOSEKI KOJIMA

Goseki Kojima was born on November 3, 1928, the very same day as the godfather of Japanese comics, Osamu Tezuka. While just out of junior high school, the self-taught Kojima began painting advertising posters for movie theaters to pay his bills.

In 1950, Kojima moved to Tokyo, where the postwar devastation had given rise to special manga forms for audiences too poor to buy the new manga magazines. Kojima created art for *kami-shibai*, or “paper-play” narrators, who would use manga story sheets to present narrated street plays. Kojima moved on to creating works for the *kashi-ban* market, bookstores that sent out books, magazines, and manga to mostly low-income readers. He soon became highly popular among *kashi-ban* readers.

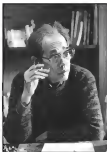
In 1967, Kojima broke into the magazine market with his series *Definki*. As the manga magazine market grew and diversified, he turned out a steady stream of popular series.

In 1970, in collaboration with Kazuo Koike, Kojima began the work that would seal his reputation, *Kozure*

*Okami* (*Low Wolf and Cub*). Before long the story had become a gigantic hit, eventually spinning off a television series, six motion pictures, and even theme song records. Koike and Kojima were soon dubbed the “golden duo” and produced success after success on their way to the pinnacle of the manga world.

When *Manga Japan* magazine was launched in 1994, Kojima was asked to serve as consultant, and he helped train the next generation of manga artists.

In his final years, Kojima turned to creating original graphic novels based on the movies of his favorite director, Akira Kurosawa. Kojima passed away on January 5, 2000 at the age of 71.





The Eisner and Harvey Award-winning series continues to storm down the path of vengeance and blood. The Shogun himself has given conniving Retsudo Yagyu a stern warning: do something about former executioner Ito Ogami, the Lone Wolf, or the Yagyu clan will fall out of favor. Now Retsudo must turn to the Fire Watchers, a select band of warriors, for help — as well as the last surviving members of the legendary Kurakuwa ninja clan! As death stalks him, Ogami is confronted by desperate, impoverished peasants who want him to share his fortune with the suffering. With Ogami's cub, Daigoro, caught in the middle, what will he decide? Find out in this volume of the series everyone can't stop talking about.

*"Lone Wolf and Cub is an inspiration of what comic-book storytelling should be."*

— Stan Sakai  
creator, Usagi Yojimbo

Published for the first time in America in the Japanese format.

■ HARVEY AWARD WINNER

■ EISNER AWARD WINNER



子連太郎

Front cover artwork by  
BILL SIENKIEWICZ